

(WASHINGTON)---- Congressman Allen West (R-FL) introduced the Foreign Service Line of Duty Death Gratuity Act of 2011 today, along with Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-MS) and more than 20 other original cosponsors. The bipartisan legislation authorizes the Department of State to provide compensation for families of fallen Foreign Service employees comparable to what the government provides families of fallen military personnel.

The Foreign Service Line of Duty Death Gratuity Act also recognizes America's moral obligation to the families of twelve Americans killed in the August 1998 Al Qaeda bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Many of the surviving family members of that incident have endured significant financial and personal hardships, serving as a poignant example of the burdens faced by survivors. These families have been unable to seek damages through the courts because damages are limited to state-sponsored acts of terror.

"As our nation remembers the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, it is important to acknowledge that the attacks in New York and Washington, DC were not the first attacks upon our nation, but rather an escalation of previous terrorist attacks against the United States," West said. "In many of our embassies and Foreign Service posts, American employees serve alongside, and face the same hazards and risks, as our military personnel and intelligence officers. As Foreign Service employees engage more visibly in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important that their contributions and sacrifices are as highly valued as those of our military personnel."

Congressman West's statement for the Congressional Record is attached [here](#).